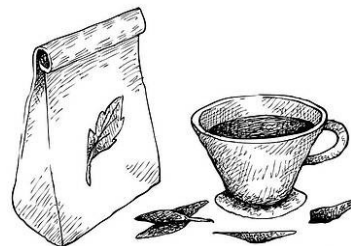


Making Medicinal Teas at Home: A loose leaf primer

Healing herbal teas can be easily prepared at home with plants selected to address a range of common ailments such as stomach discomfort and anxiety. A daily practice of preparing herbal teas from nutrient dense plants such as Nettles and Oatstraw can be thought of as making your own herbal multivitamin. Each of our cells is bathed or born of the waters of our bodies. Extracting herbal constituents (molecules and compounds that are found within the plant itself) into water is a fantastic ways to absorb their medicines.



Our bodies respond well when working with the whole plant and all it's complex constituents (rather than one part that has been isolated and encapsulated) and formulas of plants are often more potent than a singular plant. This is the creative component of herbalism. Strive to get to know the personality of each plant individually and the way it impacts your body, then have fun combining and experimenting for flavor and effect. This is a lifelong practice. There is no rush. *Cheers to your health!*

These instructions are for preparing herbal teas with loose (not bagged) herbs. You don't need any special equipment for preparing herbal teas. Teapots and infusers of various sizes are good, and a lidded jar works just as effectively. The more room the dried plants have to float, absorb water and release their constituents, the more potent or complete your extraction. You can strain your tea through a strainer basket or a piece of cheesecloth (any permeable natural fabric will work). After straining, I like to give a squeeze to the herbs to separate all the liquid from the plants and pour it in my cup.

Strive to use organic, ethically wild-crafted, or homegrown herbs. Good medicine comes from well cared-for plants. Likewise, quality water makes quality medicine. Distilled water, although impractical, is ideal since it is a blank slate for extraction (hydrogen and oxygen molecules aren't bound up with minerals etc.) However using the drinking water available to you is more than fine for your daily tea. *Love and gratitude for water in all it's forms.*



Tea is a catch all term that specifically refers to a drink made from the leaves and buds of *Camellia sinensis* (i.e. green and black tea). Herbal teas of the grocery store variety are enjoyed mostly for their flavor and are usually prepared by steeping a tea bag for 2-5 minutes. Since *tea* is such a well-known and (in my opinion) adorable word, I refer to all herbal beverages extracted in water as tea. How you prepare your tea depends on which plant and which part of the plant you are using.

Let's explore two methods of making medicinal teas:

Infusions are a simple and popular way to use plants as remedies for specific ailments or simply to enjoy for their flavor. Pour hot (boiled) water over plant matter (usually leaves and flowers) and cover (this prevents volatile oils from escaping in the steam). This can be done in a mason jar, teapot, or mug. Allow plant matter to steep for at least 15 minutes before straining. Depending on one's personal tastes and desired strength, use 1 teaspoon - 1 tablespoon herb to 1 cup water.

Decoctions are a water extraction of the tougher parts of medicinal plants (roots, seeds, berries, and bark). They are usually made for specific ailments and can be stored, covered, at room temperature for 24hrs. or in the fridge for up to 72hrs. Combine 3 tablespoons of roots or bark with 1 quart (4 cups) of water, cover and simmer on low heat for at least 15 minutes. Strain, sweeten (optional), and enjoy!

- Dried herbs are preferable to fresh herbs for infusions and decoctions. A dried herb offers more constituents for extraction into water than a fresh herb where the cells are already replete with water.
- Boiling leaves or flowers destroys their medicinal value while simply steeping roots or barks doesn't fully extract their medicinal properties. There are exceptions to this guideline and ways to prepare leaves, flowers, roots, berries and barks together.

Here are three other options for preparing herbal teas:

A nourishing infusion is a large amount of herb brewed for a long time. Typically, one ounce by weight (about a cup by volume) of dried herb is placed in a quart jar which is then filled to the top with boiling water, tightly lidded and allowed to steep for 4-10 hours. After straining, a cup or more is consumed, and the remainder chilled to slow spoilage. Drinking 2-4 cups a day is usual.

Combining Roots and Leaves:

Decoct your tough celled herbs and remove from heat. Remove lid and toss in your more delicate leaves and flowers. Replace lid and allow it to steep for 20 minutes. Strain and toast to your health.

Overnight infusion:

Combine your herbal ingredients in a jar with a tight fitting lid (with roots, bark, or berries coarsely chopped or ground) pour boiled water over herbs. Cover and steep overnight (or all day). By time this infusion is cooled, most of the herbal constituents will have been extracted.

A few common medicinal herbs that are great for everyday use are: nettles, oatstraw, alfalfa, raspberry leaf, red clover, lemon balm, peppermint, chamomile, rose, and tulsi/holy basil.



Try this recipe to nourish the body and elevate your mood:

The amounts given are guidelines and can be adjusted to taste:

- 1 Tbsp. Nettle
- 1 Tbsp. Oatstraw
- 1 Tbsp. Tulsi / Holy Basil
- 1 tsp. Rose petals
- 1 tsp. Marshmallow root or leaf

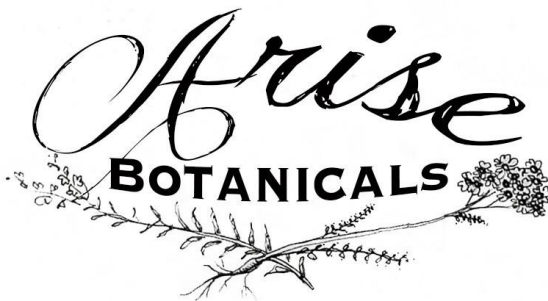
Combine and prepare with 32oz boiled water. Cover and steep for 15 minutes or more.

Herbal infusion for deeper sleep:

The amounts given are guidelines and can be adjusted to taste or according to availability:

- 1 Tbsp. Linden
- 2 tsp. Chamomile
- 1 tsp. Skullcap
- 1 tsp. Hops

Combine and prepare with 16oz boiled water. Cover and steep for 15 minutes or more.



*Arise Botanicals is the work of herbalist, Alex Svoboda. My practice is rooted in Lincoln, NE and based around one-on-one **herbal consultations, hands-on workshops, seasonal products and custom herbal formulations.** I practice in the Western herbal tradition as a certified clinical herbalist and nutritionist. Many of the remedies I use are locally cultivated by myself or other trusted growers. Sourcing remedies from the ecosystems we live in is an important part of the medicine I offer.*

Please follow me on Instagram and Facebook (@arisebotanicals)
and sign up for my newsletter at AriseBotanicals.com

Community Resilience Through Reclaiming Our Health